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## AMERICAN ART IN THE PARIS SALON.

EVERY year Americans visit the Salon with high hopes that some new genius has sprung to light among our countrymen, and almost every year the honor of concentrating those bright anticipations belongs to one or another of our young Americans abroad. One year it seemed sure that Bridgman was the bright particular star of our young Occident, another year Charles Sprague Pearce gave out heat and light, then came Bicknell and then Knight; then another year Walter Gay's rich and piquant little canvases made many confident that here at last was the coming man, while this year not a few contended that in Sargent was plainly seen our Velazquez of the future.

Whatever Sargent may be, he will never be an American Velazquez. Born in Italy, educated in French ateliers, painting for Europe from Spanish inspirations, there is nothing whatever American in his art. His "Gipsy Dance" attracted considerable attention last spring—from artists as an extraordinary artistic "tour de force," from the general public as the ugliest picture in the whole exhibition. Sargent is largely "bitten" by Regnault and Fortuny, but his "Dance" would seem to indicate that he has not yet mastered their secret of chastening, or learned that breezy dash and eccentric studies of light, unrestrained, very speedily deposit a painter in a whirl of "bravura" vulgarity. In this "Dance" Sargent disdains finish for ostentatious cleverness, and the result is a rough splash of hideous forms, and of faces more like Japanese masks than Spanish countenances, with the light thrown up from invisible footlights upon the ugliest angles of a very ugly central figure. In this work everything gives way to one dominant idea; form is so much sacrificed to the play of artificial light that the dancer might be hewn wood and moved by wires, and the musicians might be grotesquely daubed jointed dolls. This may prove a genius for "chiaroscuro" and a brilliant contempt for Academic rules, but its result is certainly far from grateful to the eye and far from artistic beauty and grace.

Sargent's portrait of Miss Burchard, also shown at the Salon, was infinitely more refined, happily also more refined than his dishevelled, red-haired, vulgar portrait of a year or two ago. The young girl in this year's picture was dressed in mourning in the very latest mode, with exactly the colossal bouffant tournure that fashion put upon all lady visitors to the Salon of 1882. Artists contend that Fashion is Philistine, because it usually so entirely conceals and disguises the lines of the human form divine. Yet here was an instance which proved a fashion to be Philistine only to its contemporaries, and that, let it only be antique enough, it would become picturesque. The costume of this portrait disguised the form utterly, so that not even a foot was seen, and the lower part of the figure was a pyramid standing flat upon its base. Yet the artist had managed to give it such an indescribable quaintness of air and pose, and had treated it so thoroughly in the artistic spirit, that—in spite of its purplish, metallic flesh—one was instantly reminded of Velazquez, and could not but imagine how exquisitely quaint and strange it will seem to those who shall see it a hundred years hence.

After the picturesque quaintness of Sargent's portrait, Bridgman's "Roman Lady" had the noble largeness and dignity of antique art, even with its romantic dress and thoroughly modern and irregular face. The countenance was not exactly impressive, not peculiarly aristocratic or suggestive of grand deeds done or dreamed, but the whole picture in drapery, pose, color, form, and spirit had the grandeur of antique heroic poetry. Between these two last-named pictures exists a difference of centuries. Bridgman's large "Colza Plantation" showed the artist's complete emancipation from the artificiality of his master, Gérôme, and a breadth and vigor of movement, an artistic expansion, so to speak, that reminded one of the genius let loose from the necromancer's jar in the story of the Arabian Nights. Let us hope that the genius will never be inveigled back into the jar!

Walter Gay's little pictures were as rich in color, as facile in execution, as his work always is. Remembering his very successful "Bird Charmers" of two years ago, and looking at his little canvases of this season, one feels what a good gift to receive from nature "knack" is—the knack which, with taste and plenty of bitumen, will turn you out depth and splendor, Watteau-like grace, Rembrandt-like mystery, and Meis-

sonier-like realism, with the least possible expenditure of labor. As decorative work, Gay's canvases are always perfect, but a sophisticated picture-viewer demands that the ineffable poetry of remoteness, dreamy vistas and airy forest spaces shall be more than merely indicated by solid patches of bitumen, however adroitly illusive. There were no spaces, vistas, or distances in Gay's pictures of this year, although there was plenty of bitumen; and these remarks apply more to his work in general.

Charles Sprague Pearce's two pictures were a cabinet "Rosina," and a large "Arab Goldsmith." Neither of them suggested awkwardly posed studio models so aggressively as did the artist's more successful (that is, more successful as far as honorable mention is concerned), "Decapitation of St. John" of last year. There is an element of the commonplace in this artist's work, clever as his technique is, and one needs no stronger proof of it than the uninteresting expressionless head which he painted from the tawny-skinned, panther-eyed, elf-like Rosina, wildest and lithest of all the savage creatures on the savage isle of Capri.

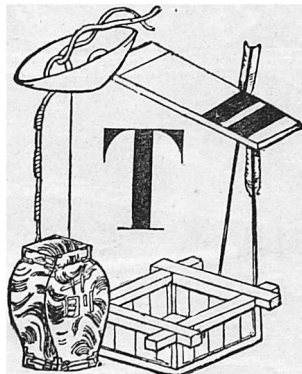
In Knight's "Un deuil" were to be seen the microscopic detail of one of his masters (Meissonier), and the porcelain finish of the other (Gleyre), invigorated and enlarged by an artistic individuality different from either. It was not a pretty picture, nor a gay one of course, being painted for tone more than for fascinating color, and bearing a melancholy title. Neither was it a sad one, in spite of its three women gazing pityingly upon a peasant girl in black sitting on gray steps, its technical purpose being so much more emphatic than its spiritual or sentimental one as to crowd the latter quite out of sight.

Frank Penfold, of Buffalo, received honorable mention for a rather depressing canvas called "Death of the First-Born." As this artist subscribes himself the pupil of his father only he may be, perhaps, considered a pure American artist, notwithstanding the fact that his work looks thoroughly of the Bonnat studio. His picture was in a low key and received its honorable notice probably on account of the clever effect of artificial and natural light, contrasted by a candle flame burning in daylight at the head of a most cadaverous and unpleasant-looking baby's coffin.

Charles E. Moss had one of those elaborately studied and composed interiors which invariably remind the spectator of a South Kensington or Cluny catalogue, or of the "Salle des ventes" at the Hôtel Drouot. Nothing could have been better than its technique, careful and yet free, even although betraying a suspicion on the artist's part that every detail of carved furniture would be looked at with microscopic eye. Its figures were so conspicuously of the Boulevard Clichy atelier that they seemed a little foreign in not being dressed in Italian peasant costumes, but the sentiment of the picture was thoroughly of the Cotter's Saturday Night and American Sunday-school order.

## My Note Book.

LONDON, July 5, 1882.



HE sale at Christie's of the famous Hamilton Palace collection of pictures, furniture, and bric-à-brac, although now in its third week, is still the talk of fashionable London. It will be three weeks more before it is ended. Such an accumulation of art treasures is seldom dispersed

in the lifetime of the owner, and connoisseurs from all parts of the world are present as bidders or spectators. Naturally there are very many times more of the latter than of the former. As usual, at such sales, the lowest figures in many cases were the most extravagant. This was especially the case with the pictures. The highest prices showed, by contrast with those paid at recent sales for modern masters, that living artists of the first rank are appreciated commercially at least as highly as the most famous of the

"old masters." The highest price so far was paid for Rubens' "Daniel in the Lions' Den," which brought £5145—a picture seven and a half feet high by nearly eleven in length. It will be remembered that Ruskin recently sold his little Meissonier, only 12 inches by 9, for £600.

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THAT this matchless accumulation of centuries should be thus ruthlessly broken up is generally regretted, except, of course, by dealers and collectors who benefit by the necessities of the ducal spendthrift. This ignoble young nobleman parts with his ancestral treasures with little compunction it is said; and this may readily be believed; for his tastes, it is well known, are rather of the stable than of the salon, and horse races and cock-fights contribute much more to his enjoyment than do "old masters" and bibelots. Yet I do hope that he was able to summon a blush to his cheek when the auctioneer knocked down to a dealer for comparatively a small sum of money the miniature of "A Knight of the Garter," attributed to Holbein, which, according to the catalogue, was presented by King Charles I. to the young man's ancestor, "the Lord Marquis of Hambleton."

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RUBENS' animal masterpiece is certainly very striking, although a candid judge must allow that Rosa Bonheur paints lions infinitely better than did the famous Peter Paul. The prophet himself, who is represented sitting naked in the middle of the den, his hands clasped, and his countenance directed upward with an expression of earnest prayer, is not imposing. To tell the truth, he is very ugly and looks fat and overfed, as do indeed the nine lions prowling around him. The picture, however, is fine in drawing and superb in color, and would probably have brought more money, if it had not been known to a few connoisseurs that there is an almost identical picture attributed to Rubens—and a better one it is said—in the parish church of Godshill, near Ryde, in the Isle of Wight. The Times newspaper, after the sale, claimed to have been aware of this fact all along, but for some unexplained reason—apparently for the benefit of the Duke of Hamilton—the information was withheld from the public. Mr. Beckett Denison bought this picture, as well as a beautiful little oval grisaille, by the same master, of the "Birth of Venus," for £680. An oval portrait, in grisaille, of the Duc d'Orléans, went to Mr. Winkworth for £472 10s.

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RUBENS' "Daniel" was not by any means the only picture in the collection which is under a cloud. A portrait of King Edward VI., for instance, bought at £798 for the Queen's private gallery in Windsor Castle, was wrongly attributed in the catalogue to Holbein. It is undeniably a fine painting; but as Holbein died in 1543, when the Prince was only in his sixth year, it must have been executed by some other artist—probably by Streeter. The unchallenged Holbeins in the collection brought comparatively small prices.

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ALSO of doubtful authenticity was the portrait of Albert Dürer, said to have been painted by himself. He is represented with long brown hair, white dress and cap and brown cloak, an hour glass in a niche behind him, signed with a monogram and date 1507. Dr. Waagen considered the picture an old copy, but the auctioneer vaguely described it as "a replica, so to speak, of the picture in the Madrid gallery," and knocked it down to Mr. J. H. Pollen for £409 10s. A doubtful Quentin Matsys went for £125. This was the picture called "The Misers," representing two mean-looking fellows counting their gold pieces and entering the tally in their books. It is familiar to nearly all of us by the engravings of it. Sometimes it is called "The Money Changers."

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NEXT to the large Rubens, the greatest price was given for Hobbema's picture of a water-mill and adjoining cottages in a richly wooded country. Mr. Sedelmeyer buying it for £4252 10s., not a high price compared with that paid for "Les Moulins" by the same famous artist at the recent San Donato sale. The day previous to the present sale, standing in a knot of admirers before this exceedingly beautiful little landscape, I could not help overhearing the remarks of two